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RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 6310
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT 4126
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 2709
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 7312
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 1324
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 4692
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM 0908
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INFO RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NICOSIA 7043

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DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/S:STHIBEAULT AND
JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBOURGEOIS, DBENZE AND
AFERNANDEZ, IIP/G/NEA-SA RWINCHESTER
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC
CENTCOM FOR CCPA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: KMDR PREL KPAO OPRC SY

SUBJECT: Damascus Media Reaction: Post-war Maneuvering, Rice's Visit, Lebanon (10/04-05)

¶1. Summary: The Syrian press on October 4 and 5 focused on the October 1973 War between Arabs and Israel. All government-owned papers earmarked full pages to mark the 33rd anniversary of the war. They described it as "the first Arab War in the History of the conflict (between Arabs And Israel)." The Syrian press recalled that the war was "a painful smack to Israeli arrogance and aggressiveness." It focused on resistance as "an option to protect Arab rights."

Papers continued to cover the Secretary of State's visit to the region. They focused on the meeting in Cairo with eight Foreign Ministers, where a Rice advisor was quoted as saying that "the US Administration hopes for a coalition that includes the US, the European allies, Israel and the moderate Arab states in order to foil the alliance of rebels in the region."

Papers also covered a statement by Hezbollah's Deputy Secretary General that the February 14 Movement has started to implement a plan made by the US Embassy in Beirut, to focus on the disaster in Lebanon rather than the victory which was achieved there.

End of summary.

¶2. Selected Headlines:

October War is the first Arab War in the history of conflict between Arabs and Israel (Government-owned Tishreen, 10/05/2006)

Our people and nation mark anniversary of liberating October War (Government-owned al Baath, 10/05/2006)

Liberating October: When will Arabs learn how to benefit from their victories (Government-owned Tishreen, 10/05/2006)

Kuwaiti Foreign Minister: Syria is a difficult figure in the peace equation (Government-owned Tishreen, 10/05/2006)

Hezbollah: February 14 Movement works in accordance with the plan of the US Embassy (Government-owned Tishreen, 10/04/2006)

Our Armed Forces Celebrate the 33rd Anniversary of liberating

October War (Government-owned Tishreen, 10/04)

Before the "Moderates," Rice attacks Syria (Government-owned al-Thawra, 10/04/2006)

3. Editorial Block Quotes:

"Rice's Colonial Dreams"

Issam Dari, an editorialist in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (10/04):

"Miss Rice can dream of a new middle east that is free of resistance, of... 'terrorists' or of countries which the US classifies as enemies."

"However, she cannot turn her dreams into reality. Not because this is impossible, but because she is unable to delude Arab public opinion any longer."

"The envoy of the Neo-Conservatives... wants to build walls among the sons and daughters of one identity...in order to rally one team against the other, on the one hand, and to create discord among Arabs, and even among the people in each country if possible, on the other hand."

"Isn't this the theory of the Old Colonialism? ... Isn't it shameful for this country [the US] to claim that it wants freedom, independence and sovereignty of the peoples, while it is occupying two countries, threatening other independent countries

with ... armed power, and interfering in the internal affairs of other countries, depending on small groups that have sold their countries for a handful of dollars.

"A short-sighted American View"

An editorial in government owned al Baath read (10/04):

"The region is in need of the continuous and active presence of the US, but it is not the presence which Secretary Rice brings to the region, with its statements preaching sometimes of a new middle east, and other times of dividing the region into axes and camps, which do not exist outside the imagination of the US policy theorists and some of their petty disciples in the region.

"The American role is needed. There is no other country that can play this role. This is a fact that is well-known by the peoples of this region. However, this cannot be taken for granted, as if it were an inescapable destiny, especially under the auspices of the current US Administration, when it draws a distorted image of the region and sides entirely with Israeli aggression, sacrificing Arab rights and their just causes."

Peace cannot be achieved without dialogue among the concerned parties: with Syria..., the elected Palestinian government, and even with Iran...."

Corbin